

THE RAILWAY SERIES NO. 42

Thomas and his Friends



CHRISTOPHER AWDRY





Titles in the series

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2. Thomas the Tank Engine
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The Railway Series No. 42

THOMAS AND HIS FRIENDS

by
CHRISTOPHER AWDRY

with illustrations by
CLIVE SPONG

EGMONT

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We bring stories to life

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Thomas the Tank Engine & Friends™



CREATED BY BRITT ALLCROFT

Based on the Railway Series by the Reverend W Awdry

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In memory of Rev. W. Awdry (1911–1997), without whom none of
Thomas' adventures would have been told.

FOREWORD

DEAR FRIENDS,

The Awdry family is delighted to be able to mark the centenary of the Thin Clergyman's birth with the publication of this book. The Fat Controller wanted to celebrate the occasion too, and quietly made his own plans. What were they? Turn the pages to find out ...

THE AUTHOR

Thomas and the Swan

THOMAS and Gordon were at the Big Station, where Gordon had just backed down to take the Express.

"Hello, Gordon," said a voice. "Remember us?"

Gordon was late and not in the mood for guessing games, but he thought he recognised the voice. "Pip—?" he ventured carefully. "Or is it Emma?"

"It's me!" Philippa laughed. "Well done. Emma is at the back today."

"Why are you here?" asked Thomas.

The question was answered at once as the Fat Controller arrived.



"Philippa and Emma," the Fat Controller began importantly, "could be very helpful to my Railway."

"Yes, Sir," agreed Gordon, though he wasn't sure why.

"Too much time," the Fat Controller went on, "is wasted by changing the Engine of the Express at the Other Railway. Our timetable is too slow."

Suddenly Gordon realised what the Fat Controller meant.

"And if Pip and Emma were the Express instead of me pulling it there wouldn't be a changeover."

"Exactly," agreed the Fat Controller. "Well done, Gordon."



After that, the Fat Controller often saw Pip and Emma at the Big Station.

"You're doing well," he would say, kindly. "I am very pleased – my plan is working."

One day Thomas was at the Junction when, with a cheerful "Good morning", Pip and Emma hurried by.

Moments later, with a rattle and a roar, they were gone.

"They're a great success," remarked Thomas' Driver, "and Gordon loves it – he says he can now do two trips a day instead of one."



A little later, Thomas set off along the branch line, with Annie and Clarabel following cheerfully behind.

Today there was an Inspector on Thomas' footplate so the small space was quite crowded. The Inspector was assessing Thomas' Fireman for possible promotion.

They stopped at the station by the river for Thomas to take on water. While they waited, Thomas saw something white on the rails in front.

"What's that?" he asked.

"Just an old newspaper, I expect," said his Driver. "Come on."



Just then, Thomas saw a white neck uncurl and a yellow beak appear.

"Stop!" he called. "It's not a newspaper!"

Quickly the Driver braked, and the Inspector got down. He went to look and then returned to the cab.

"It's a swan," the Inspector told Thomas' Driver. "It must have flown into the parapet of the bridge by mistake. Can you come and help, please?"

Thomas watched anxiously as the two men lifted the bird. It tried to flap its wings, but only one moved.



Very carefully, the Inspector and the Driver carried the injured swan past Thomas. They placed it gently in a corner of the cab and the Inspector covered it with his coat.

"Off we go, Thomas," said his Driver. "Be as gentle as you can."

The Fireman had told the Signaller at the river station what had happened so they had a clear run to the top station.

When they got there, the Inspector took the swan in his car to a nearby vet.



The vet reset the broken wing and kept the bird in his surgery garden until it was strong enough to fly. Then he went with Thomas to the river to let the swan go free.

Word of Thomas' rescue spread fast and soon all the engines had heard about it. Pip and Emma congratulated him when they saw him at the Big Station, and so did the Fat Controller. Gordon, too, was very proud.

"Just think," said Pip, "if it had been us as the Express, we wouldn't have been able to stop!"

"And now we can add injured birds to our list of passengers!" said Thomas, proudly.

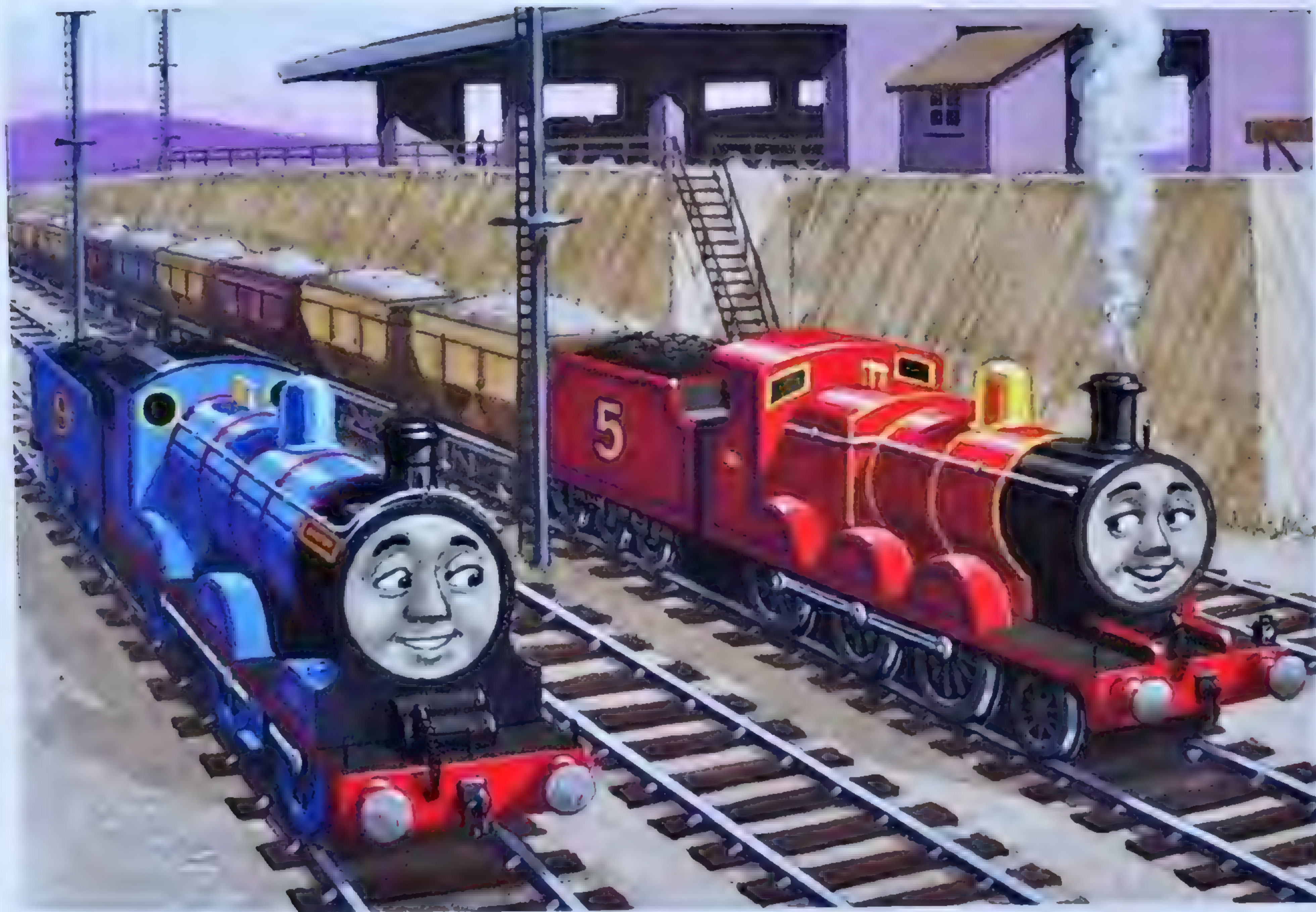


Buffer Bashing

WINTER was passing but there were still one or two late frosts, which made everything look sugar-coated and sparkling in the spring sunshine.

As the months had passed, Pip and Emma had become quite used to being the Express and making their daily journey between the Big Station and London.

Each morning, Donald and Douglas took it in turns to bring a ballast train from the small railway and James then pulled the trucks to a place where the line was being mended.



One morning, Donald was uncoupled and ran ahead into a short siding to let James take his place at the front of the trucks.

But a hard frost had made the rails icy. When Donald tried to stop his wheels locked and they slid on the ice. Before he could say "Fat Controller", he hit the buffers at the end of the siding.

The buffers stopped him – that was what they were there for – but they were badly damaged.

Donald was lucky. He wasn't hurt at all, just embarrassed.



The other engines teased him.

"You should go in for skating championships!" they said.

Even Donald laughed, though he was worried about what the Fat Controller might say. But the Fat Controller only warned him to be more careful – he knew it hadn't really been Donald's fault.

The next day, men were sent to mend the buffers.

At last, James' repair work on the line was ending.

"Tomorrow's train, Douglas, will be the last for the time being," the Fat Controller told him.



The next day, as Douglas drew his loaded trucks to a halt in their siding, James was waiting. "Here you are, James," Douglas said cheerfully. "What are you going to do, now this job is finishing?"

"Pull some passenger trains, I hope," replied James. "I'm getting tired of doing the same thing all the time."

"Never mind," said Douglas. "Today's the last one."

His Fireman uncoupled the trucks and climbed back into the cab. Then Douglas puffed slowly into the short siding.



At the end of the siding, the men who had been mending the buffers were standing to one side. They had pots of paint beside them, and had just finished painting the buffer-bar bright red.

"That looks very smart," thought Douglas. "Much better than it did before – the Fat Controller's probably glad that Donald smashed it up."

He moved into the siding. His Driver put on the brakes.

Nothing happened!

The Driver tried again. Still nothing.

"Horrors!" exclaimed Douglas. "I can't stop!"



The workmen watched in dismay. Douglas rolled steadily along the line and smashed to splinters the buffers they had just spent three days mending.

“Ouch!” exclaimed Douglas, opening his eyes cautiously. “That hurt!”

The new buffers had stopped him. But unfortunately, Douglas had been moving faster than Donald. He was in a terrible mess – his front was badly bent and he was smeared with the bright red paint, which hadn’t had time to dry.



"You silly great engine," scolded the Foreman, waving his paintbrush, angrily. It still had red paint in it – and some of the paint flew out and stuck on Douglas' nose.

"Three days' work," the Foreman said, crossly, "and in three seconds, you come and smash it all to pieces!"

Douglas' front wheels were off the rails, so James had to come and rescue him.

Later, the Fat Controller spoke sternly to Douglas about engines not taking care in sidings.

And the red paint was left on Douglas' nose, as a reminder.



Gordon's Fire Service

Pip and Emma were delighted to be able to run fast times to London. Gordon would have had to stop for water, but they didn't need to. Gordon couldn't understand why the Controllers had taken all the waterpipes away. He was even a bit suspicious about it.

"Proper engines can't work without water," he kept saying. "It's sabotage, that's what!"

"Diesel and electric trains don't need water," Pip and Emma tried to explain. "We don't have to make steam like you do."

But Gordon wasn't convinced.



“Does the Other Railway have electric trains too?” asked Henry. “Like the ones that go past our Mountain Railway?”

“Some are like that,” said Emma. “Some trains are pulled by electric engines.”

That silenced Henry, for a while.

Gordon’s last train each day stopped at all the stations. He liked this because he didn’t have to hurry and get hot and bothered. One evening, however, delays on the Other Railway made Gordon late. At last he drew into the station where the electric line began.



As Gordon stopped, an electric train slid silently off the branch line and stopped at another platform. It caught Gordon's attention as it made no noise – and no steam.

Beyond the station, a busy road crossed under the railway. Gordon was about to leave when he heard a shout in front of him. A man appeared, scrambling up the bank near the bridge. A wisp of smoke rose behind him. The man ran towards the station, waving his arms.

“Help!” he yelled. “Fire!”



A Porter ran to telephone for the Fire Brigade. Gordon's Fireman asked permission from the Signaller, and carefully worked the train forward. They stopped near the bridge. Smoke billowed from a bale of straw that lay on the roadside verge. A tractor and trailer stood nearby.

"Got the straw off before the rest went up," gasped the tractor driver. "Now we must wait for the Fire Brigade!"

Tongues of flame curled round the edges of the straw-bale and the smoke grew thicker.



"Can't we do something?" urged Gordon, giving a poop of alarm.

"We certainly can," said his Fireman. He grabbed the hosepipe he used to wash the footplate with water from the tender. Then he turned the tap, and when the water was running, he pointed the hosepipe at the burning straw.

It wasn't a very strong jet of water, but it was enough. Slowly, the flames died down and the tractor driver stamped out the remaining embers. At that moment, the Fire Brigade arrived.



"Sorry," the tractor driver explained. "I'm afraid you've had a wasted journey. Gordon has put the fire out with water from his tender."

The Fire Chief laughed. "Well done, Gordon – a good job you were standing by."

Gordon was very proud, and prouder still when the Fire Chief recommended him for the Queen's Fire Service Medal. The Fat Controller arranged a special presentation at the Big Station.

"Electric trains may be able to run fast, with no noise," said Gordon, "but we steam engines have our uses, too!"



Centenary

ONE day in early summer the Fat Controller called a meeting of the engines.

“You have all heard,” he announced, “of the Thin Clergyman.”

“Isn’t he the one who wrote stories about us?” ventured Thomas.

“Well done, Thomas,” agreed the Fat Controller. “Sadly he has now died, but this year it is one hundred years since he was born.”

He paused.

“To mark this auspicious occasion —” he went on.

“What’s suspicious?” squeaked Percy, and then hoped the Fat Controller hadn’t heard him.



But he had.

“‘Auspicious’, Percy – it means important,” explained the Fat Controller. “To mark this ... er ... important occasion I have arranged for a bust of the Thin Clergyman to be unveiled here in a few weeks. Your duties will be adjusted so that you can all attend. There will be a very special visitor there to unveil the bust.”

Some time later, the Fat Controller spoke to James.

“I have an important job for you,” he said. “The crate with the Thin Clergyman’s statue has arrived at the Other Railway. I want you to fetch it, please.”



James puffed off proudly. He felt even prouder when he began the journey back to the Big Station with the crate safely on a truck.

But just as James had passed through Henry's tunnel, there was a rumble ... and an enormous crash. James' Driver looked back in alarm. Part of the tunnel had collapsed behind them. The Railway to the outside world was completely cut off!

James stopped at the next signal-box and his Driver told the Signaller what had happened.

Later, the Fat Controller sent Donald, Douglas and Henry to help repair the tunnel, but until it was mended, no trains could reach the Other Railway from the Island of Sodor.



“And no engines can get onto the Island either,” pointed out Gordon. “Pip and Emma are stuck on the other side of the tunnel, and they are supposed to bring the important visitors.”

On Thomas’ branch line the engines were worried, too.

“We’ve all got jobs to do on the day,” said Thomas, “but what if no one can get here?”

“Don’t worry,” soothed his Driver. “Bertie and his friends are meeting all the trains on the Other Railway and bringing the passengers over.”



The Fat Controller gave orders to carry on as usual, but Gordon's trains to the Other Railway had to stop at the Works Station. Bertie brought him passengers, but Gordon complained that it wasn't the same.

Meanwhile, Percy had a smaller problem.

"Why is everyone bothered about something that's broken?" he asked Toby one day.

Toby was puzzled.

"Broken?" he asked. "What do you mean, broken?"

"Well," explained Percy, "the Fat Controller said it was bust."

"What's bust?"

"The Thin Clergyman, poor man," said Percy sadly.



Thomas, listening nearby, laughed. "The Thin Clergyman isn't broken," he chuckled. "A bust is a sort of statue, just the head and shoulders of the person."

Percy cheered up at once.

"Oh!" he said. "That's all right then."

"I just hope that everybody can get to see it," put in Toby.

A few days later, the Fat Controller announced that the tunnel had been mended. The Inspectors worked through the night on their safety checks, and the first train allowed through was Pip and Emma.



At the Big Station, the bust of the Thin Clergyman, beneath a silk cover, was ready. The engines waited anxiously.

At last, Pip and Emma arrived and the first person off the train was – a Prince. The Fat Controller greeted him, and after a short speech, the Prince pulled a cord. The silk cover fell to the ground, revealing a perfect likeness of the Thin Clergyman!

“My parents,” said the Prince, “read stories about your Railway to me as a child. There will never be anything like it anywhere.”

THE END







Thomas and his Friends

CHRISTOPHER AWDRY

The Fat Controller welcomes back Pip and Emma to help on his Railway. Thomas is delighted; Gordon is worried that his time as the Express is over. But every engine has its day! Thomas makes an important rescue, Gordon proves himself a hero, and all the engines celebrate a Very Important Event.



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